DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 590 EA 030 963

AUTHOR O'Connell, Raymond W.
TITLE A Longitudinal Study of Applicants for the Superintendency.
SPONS AGENCY New York State Council of School Superintendents, Albany.
PUB DATE 2000-10-00
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Educational Research Association (Ellenville, NY, October 25-27, 2000).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Employer Employee Relationship; Employment Opportunities; Employment Practices; Gender Issues; *Personnel Management; *Personnel Needs; Personnel Policy; *Personnel Selection; *Recruitment; School Administration; Sex Discrimination; *Superintendents; *Women Administrators
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

This study documents trends in the number and quality of applicants for superintendency over time and the success rate of female applicants throughout the search process. Substantial data indicate a gender bias in selecting superintendents. Data collected in New York in 1999 were compared to 1995 data to determine if the size and quality of the applicant pool is changing, ascertain factors that correlate to pool size, reveal percentages of women candidates, document evidence of gender bias, and learn if recruitment strategies change to address projected shortages. The data indicate both the quality and size of the applicant pool continues to decline. Women comprise only 21% of the pool and minorities average less than one applicant per search. Once in the applicant pool, women are slightly more likely to be hired than are men. Salary and socioeconomic status are important factors making superintendency attractive to applicants. Recruiters are becoming more aggressive, but this approach may be counterproductive, unless definitions of professional experience and competence are broadened, because searches will focus on professional qualities likely held only by traditional candidates, and neglect nontraditional applicants. (Contains 29 references.)(TEJ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 452 590

A Longitudinal Study of Applicants for the Superintendency

Raymond W. O'Connell, Ed.D.
Director of School Administration Services
University at Albany

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the
Northeastern Educational Research Association
October 25-27, 2000
Ellenville, New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. O'Connell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Note: This research was partially supported by the New York State Council of School Superintendents.

To contact the author: Dr. Ray O'Connell, Director of School Administration Services, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222. Office phone number: 518-442-5082. Fax number: 518-442-5084. E-mail address: roconnell@uamail.albany.edu

EA 030963

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction:

In the American Association of School Administrators' continuing study of the superintendency (Glass, 1992; Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000), two important issues have emerged that will potentially influence the leadership of America's schools for many years to come. First, the majority of those currently serving in the superintendency are caucasian, male and at the age when they can retire if they so choose. Second, there is a large pool of female and a smaller, but none-the-less important, pool of administrators of color available as potential applicants for the superintendency. However, other research has shown that fewer administrators are attracted to the superintendency because of the demands of the position, concern over compensation and seemingly irresolvable quality of life issues (O'Connell, 1995). Who then will lead our schools as they grapple with the troublesome issues of reform? The current research initiative sought to document the trends in the number and quality of applicants for the superintendency over time; and to document the success rate of female applicants throughout the search process. Administrators of color still represent such a small part of the applicant pool for the superintendency that they could not be meaningfully included in this analysis.

Relevant Literature:

Across the nation, there is great concern that too few high quality educators are seeking leadership positions – particularly the superintendency. A review of the literature reveals that there has been relatively little research conducted which is directly related to the strength of the superintendent applicant pool. The research that does exist focuses primarily on the growing demand for educators to fill projected or actual vacancies within the ranks of the superintendency. Much of the research examines those administrative positions that have traditionally served as the career ladder to the superintendency (Haley & McDonald, 1988; Johnson, 1987; Jordon, McCauley & Comeaux, 1994; NESDC, 1988; Pawlas, 1989; and Wendel & Others, 1994). Generally the literature indicates that the profession is suffering from an increasing trend toward retirement among current superintendents at the same time that fewer administrators are seeking to move into the superintendency (Bowles, 1990; Glass, 1992; Hess, 1988; Price, 1994; Volp, Whitehill & Davis, 1992; Volp, Whitehill, Davis & Baretta, 1995). This concern is often voiced most loudly by those typically responsible for conducting superintendent searches (Haley & McDonald, 1988; Hess, 1988). Such concerns, if true, portend a significant crisis for those who believe that high quality superintendents are necessary for the success of today's public schools. This study is unique in that it assesses the applicant pool by surveying the gatekeepers. Most of the supply and demand studies look solely at the numbers leaving or planning to leave the profession and the numbers of educators who are certified as administrators. These studies are unable to address the most fundamental question. Of those educators who are certified to serve in the superintendency, how many are actively presenting themselves as candidates?

In New York there have been no systematic attempts to collect data on the applicant pool and, as a result, local boards of education and search consultants have been forced to rely upon anecdotal information about any impending shortage of applicants for

the superintendency. This study sought to establish baseline and trend data that would be maintained over time as a source of information about the strength of the pool of educators actively pursuing the superintendency.

There is another small but equally important body of literature that addresses the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership positions, the role of search consultants and other 'gatekeepers' in the recruitment and selection processes, and the effect of attitudes toward women in leadership roles by hiring authorities; but there is little, if any, research on the representation of women as they move through the recruitment and selection processes. It is well documented that women are under-represented in the role of superintendent nationally (Bell & Chase, 1993; Blount, 1998; Glass, 1992) and also in New York State (O'Connell, 1995; New York State Education Department, 1999; Volp, Archambeault, Barretta, Service, Terranova & Whitehill, 1998). With declining applicant pools and projections for increasing numbers of retirements (Volp et al., 1998), it is important to determine why this situation persists even though women in New York State are becoming certified as educational administrators at a rate nearly twice that of their male colleagues (New York State Education Department, 1995). Shakeshaft (1989) stated that sex discrimination exists in the hiring processes of school districts thereby denying women access to the superintendency. The role of search consultants as a potential source of selection bias has also been examined (Kamler & Shakeshaft, 1998; Tallerico, 2000). If, as a result of gatekeeper bias, women are not presented to boards of education, they can't advance in the selection process. Others (Bell & Chase, 1993; Blount, 1998; Boehlert & O'Connell, 1999; O'Connell & Tallerico, 1998; Tallerico & O'Connell, in press; Tyack & Hansot, 1982) have reported on the difficulties associated with the lack of information about gender and the superintendency. Whether the documented underrepresentation is the result of blatant sex discrimination or a more subtle variant described by Tallerico (2000) where candidates are screened out based on traditional expectations on the part of those conducting the interviews, either process eliminates needed candidates for the superintendency at a point in history when their presence in leadership roles is essential.

Traditionally, those data that would provide any prima facie evidence of gender bias in the selection process have not been collected systematically. Whether by intent as some would suggest [the 'conspiracy of silence' described by Tyack and Hansot (1982)] or through oversight, the consequence is that the recruitment and selection processes are poorly understood. By collecting data from those responsible for the technical aspects of conducting superintendent searches, this study brings fresh data to the discussion of gender bias in the superintendent selection process.

First steps toward understanding – a research collaboration:

In 1995 a collaborative research initiative was undertaken by the author and the New York State Council of School Superintendents. As one part of that initiative, a survey was sent to all superintendent search consultants actively operating within New York State to determine whether they believed that a shortage of qualified applicants existed and, if appropriate, to document the extent of that shortage (O'Connell, 1995). A

secondary purpose of the first survey was to establish baseline data so that longitudinal patterns could be examined through the administration of subsequent surveys.

The 1995 study revealed that nearly 70% of the superintendent search consultants were concerned about the size and quality of the applicant pool for the superintendency. The study confirmed the national findings of Glass (1992) that women and minorities were still underrepresented in the superintendency and, in addition, found that the size of the applicant pool was positively correlated with the offered starting salary and negatively correlated with district socio-economic status (as represented by the percent of the student population receiving free or reduced price lunches). In other words, the shortage of applicants was real, women had made small gains while minority applicants had not, and districts offering higher starting salaries were attracting the largest number of applicants.

Longitudinal data collected:

In early 1999, the second *Superintendent Search Survey* was mailed to 63 superintendent search consultants (38 district superintendents and 25 independent consultants). The second survey contained many of the same questions as the original instrument, however, it also included questions intended to explore areas of inquiry not adequately addressed in the first administration of the survey. For example, search consultants were asked to provide data on the gender and race of all applicants, first round candidates, finalists and those individuals actually appointed by the board of education so that selection bias could be examined. Unfortunately, as was the case in 1995, there were so few minority applicants that the results could not be disaggregated and meaningfully analyzed by race. In fact, only one minority applicant was appointed to the superintendency from this sample. In addition, some questions were modified or deleted based on the information gained from the first administration of the survey. Consequently, the two surveys were identical for most questions permitting comparison of results from 1995 to 1999 but the second survey was a more useful instrument since it collected important new data and eliminated questions which yielded little useful information.

A Caveat - Two different samples of respondents and school districts:

Most of the results reported here are comparisons of the 1995 and 1999 search consultant responses. It is therefore important for the reader to remember that some of the respondents were different in 1995 and 1999 and that these individuals were reporting on different school district searches predominantly conducted in 1995 and 1998 respectively. In both surveys, the search consultants were asked to provide data on their most recently conducted search to reduce sample selection bias. Consequently, this research effort compared two samples of respondents reporting on two different sets of school district searches drawn in a similar manner approximately three years apart. As a result, some of the differences noted could be due to differences in the samples selected and not to overall changes in the applicant pool. By comparing key descriptors of the 1995 and 1999

samples, the researcher attempted to demonstrate the comparability of the samples thus reducing the likelihood of this type of interpretation error. However, the reader first should judge the data and methodology and then draw her or his own conclusions in addition to those suggested by the author.

This research was supported in part by the New York State Council of School Superintendents. NYSCOSS assisted in the creation of the list of independent search consultants and handled the actual mailing of the survey. Completed surveys were returned directly to the researcher. The content of the survey instrument, the compilation of data, the analysis and interpretation of results, and the conclusions presented in this report are exclusively the responsibility of the author.

Research Questions:

1. Has either the size or quality of the applicant pool for the superintendency, as reported by superintendent search consultants, changed between 1995 and 1999?

2. What factors, if any, are significantly correlated with the size of the applicant pool?

3. What are the percentages of women in the applicant, candidate and finalist pools for the superintendency?

[Note: For the purposes of this study an applicant is anyone submitting a complete set of application materials; a candidate is an applicant selected for an initial interview; and a finalist is a candidate selected for final round interviews.]

4. Is there statistical evidence of gender bias as applicants move through the selection process?

5. Did search consultants change their recruitment strategies to address the projected shortages in the applicant pool?

Description of Responding Superintendent Search Consultants:

A thirty-two item survey was sent to all active superintendent search consultants (n = 63) operating within New York State during the period of the study. Responses were received from 38 (60.3%). The search consultants were asked to report on their most recently completed superintendent search. Due to the timing of the administration of the survey, most of the searches (89.7%) were completed in 1998, 6.9% in 1997 and 3.4% in 1999. Since most of the searches (88.5%) from the earlier survey were conducted in 1995 this study is a comparison of applicant pools approximately three years apart.

The data in Table 1 show that those individuals responding to the surveys in 1995 and 1999 had a similar number of years of experience as superintendent search consultants. Each group reported an average of over eight years of experience as

superintendent search consultants and that they had conducted an average of two superintendent searches per year over the preceding three years. While there was an increase in the percentage of responding female search consultants from 1995 to 1999, the respondents were still predominantly male (89.5%).

Because the responding search consultants have conducted an average of six searches over the past three years, they are in the best position to report changes in the size and gender composition of the applicant, candidate, and finalist pools. They are also arguably in the best position to judge any changes in the perceived quality of those same pools. It is important to remember, however, that their preconceived ideas about what high quality applicants look like might influence their judgements of women and minority applicants (Tallerico, 2000).

Table 1

Description of Superintendent Search Consultants

	1995	1999
Gender		
% (#) Male	96.2 (25)	89.5 (34)
% (#) Female	3.8 (1)	11.5 (3)
Mean years as a Search Consultant	8.2	9.0
Mean number of searches conducted in last three years	6.6	6.0

Description of the School Districts Searching for Superintendents:

For the reasons outlined above, it is important to consider the comparability of the school districts in both samples. It was determined in the first study (O'Connell, 1995) that certain descriptive variables (total district budget and the percentage of students receiving free and reduced price lunches) were significantly correlated with the size of the applicant pool. Therefore, large differences between the samples on these variables could mask actual changes in the size of the applicant pool. Table 2 shows that the two sets of districts are similar on several key variables. Independent means t-tests revealed that none of the differences in the two samples were statistically significant. Table 3 shows the percentage of urban, suburban and rural school districts for 1995 and 1999 and again it is clear from the data that the samples were similar.

These data demonstrate that the sample represents a wide range of districts from small to large and low to high socioeconomic status. Therefore, the data were drawn from

a school district sample that was diverse and reasonably representative of the state as a whole (excluding New York City).

Table 2
Descriptive School District Variables

Variable	Mean	
	1995	1999
Enrollment	2287	1967
Budget ($)	21,924,158	21,997,013
% free/reduced price lunch	32	28

Table 3
Type of District

Type	Percentage (Number)	
	1995	1999
Urban	7.7 (2)	6.9 (2)
Suburban	34.6 (9)	44.8 (13)
Rural	42.3 (11)	48.3 (14)
Not classified	15.4 (4)	0 (0)

The influence of starting salary on the applicant pool:

The mean starting salary increased by nearly $11,000 from $86,577 to $97,556 (Table 4). This equates to an increase of approximately 4% in each of the three years. A school district's financial capacity and/or willingness to offer a competitive starting salary continued to be highly correlated with the number of applicants for the superintendency ($r = .474$, $p < .05$). Starting salary was also significantly correlated with the number of high quality applicants ($r = .611$, $p = .001$). Simply put, the larger the starting salary - the larger and higher quality the applicant pool is likely to be.

In this study's sample, men appointed to the superintendency were paid an average of $7,450 more than their female counterparts. While this difference was not statistically significant ($t = .935$, $p = .363$), the results were similar to findings reported by the author and a colleague in a reanalysis of another much larger statewide data set (O'Connell & Tallerico, 1998). Caution should be used when interpreting the results from the current study because women were more frequently appointed to small districts and there was a significant correlation between starting salary and school district size ($r = .536$, $p < .01$) which may account for some of the difference in mean salary. In fact, regression analysis revealed that gender was not a statistically significant variable in the prediction of starting salary. Still it is important to note that women earned less than their male colleagues even though one reason may be that they were appointed to smaller districts with less capacity or willingness to pay higher starting salaries.

Table 4
Conditions Influencing the Search Process

Condition	1995	1999
Mean starting salary	86,577	97,556
% requiring residency	61.5	48.3
% extending search	19.2	17.2
% with distinctive qualities	73.1	72.4

The influence of socio-economic status on the size of the applicant pool:

Another important relationship continued to exist between socio-economic status, as represented by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunches, and the number of applicants for the superintendency. Lower socio-economic status school

districts were less able to attract large numbers of applicants ($r = -.701$, $p < .01$) and high quality applicants ($r = -.586$, $p = .003$). It could be reasonably argued that districts with the greatest educational challenges were least able to attract adequate pools of applicants when attempting to replace a superintendent. This is a situation which will only serve to perpetuate existing inequities among have and have not school districts. [See Appendix A for a matrix of all relevant Pearson correlation coefficients.]

The influence of residency on the search process:

The percentage of school districts requiring residency dropped from 61.5% in 1995 to 48.3% in 1999 (Table 4). Several respondents commented that boards were becoming more flexible on the issue of residency because of the shortage of applicants. Many boards of education were reluctant to screen out potentially viable candidates because of the desire to have them live in the district. Tallerico (2000) reported similar findings in her study of school board members, search consultants and recent applicants for the superintendency.

School districts requiring residency attracted an average of 23.6 applicants as compared with an average of 31.6 for those districts not requiring residency. They were also less able to attract high quality applicants [mean (residency) = 5.5 versus mean (no residency) = 9.5]. These differences are probably attributable to several related factors. First, chi square analysis revealed that urban and rural schools were much more likely to require residency than were suburban school districts ($\chi 2 = 8.6$, $p = .003$) and the suburban school districts in this sample were able to attract larger applicant pools [m(suburban) = 32.5; m(rural) = 23.4; m(urban) = 26.5]. Those districts not requiring residency also offered larger starting salaries which in turn tended to attract larger applicant pools. There is no way to know however what the effect might be if residency requirements were dropped in rural schools which tend to be more geographically isolated. Unlike most suburban schools, they do not have as large a population of commuting distance educators from which to draw administrative applicants.

Another interesting finding was related to gender. There were no gender differences related to residency. The percentages of women in the applicant pool were similar for districts requiring residency and districts not requiring residency. The residency requirement appeared to discourage members of both sexes from applying for the superintendency. So while there have been reports in the literature that women are more negatively influenced by a residency requirement, the data from this sample did not support that assertion.

The influence of special school district traits or qualities on the search process:

Search consultants reported, as they did in 1995, that most searching school districts (72.4%) possessed traits which influenced the district's capacity to attract applicants. It is interesting to note that some traits were universally considered to be positive (a supportive board of education, a supportive community, longevity of the previous superintendent, and the district's fiscal health) or negative (a contentious board

of education, the rapid turnover of previous superintendents, and an adversarial relationship between the school district and its various collective bargaining units), whereas some traits were viewed to be either positive or negative depending upon specific local circumstances (the size and geographic location of the district).

Search procedures:

The percentage of school districts extending the search process dropped from 19.2% in 1995 to 17.2% in 1998. At first glance this result seems contradictory to the finding that the size and quality of the applicant pool have continued to decline. Why would fewer searches be extended if search consultants were reporting lower numbers of applicants? When the respondents' comments are examined, however, this apparent contradiction is quite easily reconciled. First, most search consultants reported that they were still able to attract a small group of well-qualified applicants albeit through more aggressive measures. In addition, several consultants indicated that school boards were reluctant to extend the search timeframe because they did not believe they would attract additional applicants and might actually lose candidates in whom they had some interest. So even though the pool is smaller and weaker, spending more time doing the same things to attract more applicants was not judged to be a reasonable response.

Table 5 displays the reasons these superintendencies were vacant. While the rank order is the same as was reported in 1995, retirements were down slightly from 46.2% to 37.9% and job losses were up sharply; they more than doubled from 11.5% to 24.1%. Retirement was still the primary reason that these search consultants were filling superintendent vacancies across New York State.

Table 5
Reasons for Vacancy - Percentage (number)

Reason the superintendency was vacant	1995	1999
Retirement	46.2 (12)	37.9 (11)
Professional advancement	30.8 (8)	31.1 (9)
Job loss (dismissal or contract non-renewal)	11.5 (3)	24.1 (7)
Other (dissatisfaction, frustration, personal Reasons)	11.5 (3)	6.9 (2)

Description of the applicant and candidate pools:

Table 6 shows that the mean number of completed applications for New York State superintendencies dropped from 40.1 in 1995 to 27.7 in 1999. This is an almost 31% decline in three years. [Remember that these data are drawn from the two representative samples and not from all superintendent searches conducted during this three year period.] District type and geographical location continue to influence the size of the applicant pool. Urban and rural school districts attract fewer applicants than suburban districts. Searching districts in the north country and central New York report smaller applicant pools than those from the lower Hudson Valley and Long Island.

In 1999, the respondents were asked to provide disaggregated data to show the number and relative proportions of women and men at each stage of the selection process. The compilation of these data will begin to document the recruitment and selection processes leading to the appointment of a superintendent in New York State. This information will be particularly useful in determining whether gender bias exists in the superintendent selection process. Because some data were not collected in 1995 the comparisons in this report are less complete than they will be in future analyses. For this report, it was only possible to examine the selection process in 1999 but not to make any comparisons with 1995.

Women comprised similar percentages of the applicant pools for suburban (21) and rural (20) searches but a smaller percentage (13) for urban settings. Across the state, there were small but statistically insignificant differences in the percentages of women in applicant pools with the Hudson Valley lowest at 17% and Central New York highest at 25%.

Table 7 shows that the percentages of males and females are fairly consistent at each stage in the recruitment and selection processes. Women comprised nearly 21% of the applicant pool and 27.6% of those individuals were actually appointed to the superintendency. These data show that women applicants were slightly more likely to emerge as the successful candidate than were their male colleagues. However, women were still underrepresented in the applicant pool since they represented 27% of the state's secondary school principals, 49% of the state's elementary school principals and 33.2% of the deputy, associate and assistant superintendents (Report to the Governor, 1999) but only 21% of the applicant pool. The data from this sample could be very encouraging if they represent a trend since women were selected at a rate two times greater than their current percentages in the superintendency.

The data in Table 7 suggest that search consultants and school district boards of education need to increase their efforts to attract female applicants since they represent higher percentages of the *potential* applicant pool. That is to say, those experienced educators who also hold certification in school administration but are not yet serving as school leaders. Since women are still underrepresented in the *actual* applicant pool (those individuals actually submitting completed applications for the superintendency), it is critical that additional research be conducted to determine the reasons why during a time of increasing opportunity that the percentage of women submitting applications for the superintendency is not higher. Women administrators represent an important resource and must be more effectively recruited in future years.

Table 8 may help to further explain why more searches were not extended. While the total applicant pool was declining by 31%, the number of highly qualified applicants remained about the same. Although 62% of the respondents felt that the quality of the applicant pool was lower than in previous comparable searches, their explanatory statements revealed that a small core of high quality applicants still existed for many searches. They expressed concern that many of the same high quality applicants were finalists in several contemporaneous searches; in effect causing the number being reported here, in all likelihood, to be a duplicated count. As perhaps the most important manifestation of this situation, the consultants reported that school boards often lost finalists to other districts during the final stages of the search process. The stability in the reported number of highly qualified applicants may also be related to the fact that search consultants may still be judging applicant quality under an old paradigm. Consultants may still be looking for applicants with traditional profiles rather than expanding the profile to include other traits and experiences linked to leadership potential.

Table 6

Number (of applicants, candidates, finalists and those appointed) by Gender

Variable	1995			1999		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total *
Mean number of completed applications	NA	NA	40.1	20.4	5.4	27.7
Mean number of applicants interviewed	NA	NA	NA	6.4	2.3	9.1
Mean number of finalists	NA	NA	NA	2.6	1.0	3.8
Number selected	19	7	26	21	8	29

* Rows do not total because one respondent did not disaggregate the data by gender

Table 7
Percentage (of applicants, candidates, finalists and those appointed) by Gender

Variable	1995			1999		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Percentage of completed applications	NA	NA	100	79.3	20.7	100
Percentage of applicants interviewed	NA	NA	NA	72.1	27.9	100
Percentage of finalists	NA	NA	NA	71.9	28.1	100
Percentage selected	73.1	26.9	100	72.4	27.6	100

Table 8
Applicant Qualifications

	1995	1999
Mean number of applicants	40.1	27.7
Mean number of applicants judged to be minimally qualified	26.3	21.3
Mean number of applicants judged to be highly qualified	7.8	7.4

Table 9
Successful Candidate's Previous Position
(Percentages)

Previous position of the successful candidates	1995	1999
Superintendent	57.7	48.3
Interim or acting superintendent	0	3.4
Deputy, Associate or Assistant superintendent	15.4	24.1
Building principal	19.2	24.1
Other central office	7.7	0

The successful candidate for the superintendency is still most likely to have been a superintendent (Table 9). Slightly less than half of the superintendent vacancies were filled by current superintendents. Since most current superintendents are white males, this trend in selection will perpetuate the traditional profile of the superintendent and delay gender and racial balance at least for a period of time. However, the projected retirement plans of current administrators may cause school boards to reconsider the typical starting position which is to find and hire a successful current superintendent. Some consultants reported that they encourage school boards to interview both the best of the current superintendents and the best of the principals in the pool. None of the five principals appointed to the superintendency were serving at the elementary level. This result reinforces the typical career path which gives preference to a candidate who has served as a secondary or K-12 principal.

Search procedures:

When asked to respond to the question, *Have your search procedures changed over the last three years?*, 57.1% of the search consultants said yes in 1999, whereas only 7.7% said they *planned* to change their search procedures in 1995. This shift in perspective reflects the search consultants' belief that they can no longer rely solely on high quality applicants seeking them. Rather, their explanatory comments clearly reflect the belief that they needed to be more aggressive and proactive in their search strategies to continue to attract appropriate applicant pools (Table 10). The respondents said that they were actively seeking strong candidates through personal contact and targeted solicitation. Unfortunately this means that 'starter' districts may lose superintendents

more rapidly to these 'head hunting' practices. Aggressive recruitment to attract the 'best of the best' has been standard practice in business and industry for years. This change in search procedures did cause one search consultant to comment that 'the ethics of recruiting' should be examined. The difference may be found in the cultures; the primary culture of business and industry is competition. Therefore, recruiting talent from a competitor is seen as a victory; not only does the successful company hire a new leader it also weakens a competitor in the process. Whereas education has a more collaborative culture and recruiting from another district is viewed as a form of piracy.

It is important to note that although the other consultants (42.9%) reported that they did not plan to change their search practices, they may already be doing many of the things reported in Table 10 and , consequently, have less need to change. It is also plausible that since these search consultants were reporting on searches drawing an average of 10 more applicants per search that the growing shortage of applicants was having less impact on them and they saw less need to change. Perhaps the most important, and as yet unanswered, question is whether their search strategies produced the larger mean number of applicants or whether the differences were due to professional reputation, type of school districts employing them, geographical location or some other factor. Finally, a few search consultants stated that they were more actively seeking women and minority candidates.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The applicant pool for the superintendency in New York State continues to diminish in size and quality (as judged by the search consultants). While there is still a small group of high quality applicants in most searches, 35% of the searches in this sample attracted fewer than 20 total applicants. One search attracted four applicants. Women comprised only 21% of the applicant pool and minority applicants averaged less than one person per search. The underrepresentation of both groups in the applicant pool for the superintendency has changed little since 1995. However, once in the applicant pool, women were slightly more likely than their male colleagues to be selected for the position. Starting salary and district socio-economic status continued to be important factors in attracting applicants to the superintendency. Finally, search consultants are beginning to become more aggressive in the pursuit of high quality applicants for the superintendency. Unfortunately, this trend may be counterproductive if they only consider successful current superintendents and do not look at the full range of potential future superintendents.

While the method of sampling superintendent searches used in this study has produced some important preliminary information about the applicant pool and selection process, it would be far better for the NYS Education Department to collect basic information for all superintendent searches conducted across the state. Only when a statewide data set has been created will researchers be able to answer with a higher level of certainty some of the most fundamental questions about the recruitment and selection of superintendents. It also continues to be important to ascertain why the current pool of certified and experienced women and minority administrators are not applying for the superintendency in greater numbers.

Table 10

Reported changes in search procedures:
Sample comments from search consultants

More aggressive recruiting

- 'More aggressive in seeking out applicants.'
- 'A great deal more time spent recruiting and pursuing qualified candidates.'
- 'Using a more active vs. passive process including encouraging candidates to apply.'
- 'Much more aggressive in trying to recruit candidates.'
- 'We now actively recruit to extend the quality of the pool.'
- 'Must be much more aggressive in recruiting.'
- 'Increasingly necessary to search out quality candidates.'

Direct contact with potential applicants

- 'I have actually recruited people to apply.'
- 'Have to do more aggressive, personal recruiting to develop adequate pool.'
- 'More extensive advertising and personal recruiting.'
- 'More personal solicitation.'

Other strategies

- 'I am much more directive with the Board. Cautious about expectations.'
- 'Try to protect all candidates from public review until finalists are named. Too much backlash for looking now.'
- 'Expanded advertisement; additional efforts to obtain applications from females and minorities

Selected Reference List:

Bell, C.S., & Chase, S. (1993). The underrepresentation of women in school leadership. In C. Marshall (Ed.), The new politics of race and gender: Yearbook of the Politics of Education Association (pp. 288-312). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Blount, J. (1998). Destined to rule the schools: Women and the superintendency 1873-1995. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Boehlert, L. & O'Connell, R.W. (1999, April 19-23). Where are the New School Leaders for the New Millenium? Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada.

Bowles, B.D. (1990). The Silent Crisis in Educational Leadership. The Educational Digest, 55, 12-14.

District Superintendents' Committee on Women and Minority Administrators. (June 1997). Preliminary Report and Recommendations. C. Fowler. New York State Education Department. Albany, NY.

Glass, T. E. (1992). The 1992 Study of the American School Superintendency: America's Education Leaders in a Time of Reform. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Glass, T., Bjork, L. & Brunner, C.C. (2000). The 2000 Study of the American School Superintendency: A Look at the Superintendent of Education in the New Millennium. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Guilford, J.P. & Fruchter, B. (1973). Fundamental statistics in psychology and education (Fifth Edition). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Haley, P.W. & McDonald, R.W. (Eds.).(1988). An Administrative Shortage Real or Perceived? Capital Area School Development Association: Leadership in Educational Administration Development Center. Albany, NY.

Hess, F. (1988). When Our Veteran Superintendents Retire, Who'll Step into their Shoes? The American School Board Journal, 175(4), 43-44.

Johnson, J. (1987). School Administrator Supply and Demand for the State of Maine. A Study conducted for the Department of Educational and Cultural Services Advisory Committee on Administrator Supply and Demand. Testing and Assessment Center: University of Maine, Gorham.

Jordan, D.W., McCauley, H.S. & Comeaux, J.B. (1994). The Supply and Demand Trends of Public School Principals and Administrators in Southwestern Louisiana: 1993 - 1997. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 375 525)

Kamler, E., & Shakeshaft, C. (1998, April). The Role of Search Consultants in the Career Paths of Women Superintendents. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego.

NESDC (1988). Administrative Shortage in New England: The Evidence, the Causes, the Recommendations. Sudbury, MA: New England School Development Council.

New York State Education Department. (1995). A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools: Submitted April 1999. Albany: Author

New York State Education Department. (1999). A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools: Submitted April 1999. Albany: Author

New York State Education Department. (1999). A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools: Submitted April 1999. Albany: Author.

O'Connell, R. W. (1995). A Report on the Status of the Administrative Candidate Pool in New York State – 1995. Albany, NY: New York State Council of School Superintendents.

O'Connell, R.W. (1997, March). Collaborative Research Between the University and a Professional Organization on the Status of Administrative Searches. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association. Chicago: IL.

O'Connell, R. & Tallerico, M. (1998). Gender analyses: A second look at Snapshot III survey data on New York State superintendents [Research Monograph]. Hudson, NY: New York State Association for Women in Administration.

Pawlas, G.F. (1989). Supply and Demand Trends for Elementary School Administrators in South Carolina from 1977 through 2002. An Overview. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Region Council on Educational Administration. Columbia, SC.

Shakeshaft, C. (1989). Women in Educational Administration. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Tallerico, M. (2000). Accessing the Superintendency: The Unwritten Rules. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press and AASA.

Talerico, M. & O'Connell, R.W. Women and Men in the Superintendency: A Case of a Promising Alliance. in Bruner, C.C., & Bjork, L. (Eds.). The new superintendency: Advances in research and theories of school Management and educational policy. JAI Press. Accepted.

Tyack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America 1820-1980. New York: Basic Books.

Volp, F.D., Whitehill, W.E. & Davis, G.H. (1992). Snapshot of the Superintendency: A Study of School Superintendents in New York State - 1992. Albany, NY: New York State Council of School Superintendents.

Volp, F.D., Whitehill, W.E., Davis, G.H. & Baretta, A. (1995). Snapshot of the Superintendency II: A Study of School Superintendents in New York State: 1994-95. Albany, NY: New York State Association of School Superintendents.

Volp, F. D., Archambault, P., Barretta, A., Service, R., Terranova, M. & Whitehill, W. E. (1998). Snapshot of the Superintendency III: A Study of School Superintendents in New York State. Albany, NY: New York State Council of School Superintendents.

Wendel, F.C. & Others (1994). Supply and Demand of School Administrators in Nebraska. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

Appendix A

Table 10
Pearson Correlations for Selected Variables (1999 Survey Results)

	# applicants	budget	enrollment	% free/reduced	% minority	salary
# of applicants	1.000	.213	.106	-.701**	.151	.474*
budget		1.000	.924**	-.228	.389*	.660**
enrollment			1.000	-.052	.408*	.536**
% free/red. lunch				1.000	-.008	-.568**
% of minority					1.000	.370
salary						1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

(1) Guilford and Fruchter recommend Spearman's rho as a substitute for samples with small N. This statistic was computed producing very similar results to those reported here.